



## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

## AND RESEARCH NOTES

No.  941	<b>AUTHOR:</b> W. Adam Phelps, Waterfowl Research Biologist	<b>DATE</b> 10/12/2007
	<b>TITLE:</b> 2007 Light Goose Conservation Order in Indiana	

**Abstract:** *The light goose conservation order was available statewide in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2007. All participants were required by state law to obtain a free permit. An estimated 106 participants pursued light geese for a total of 352 hunter-days in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2007, harvesting an estimated 1216 light geese. Light goose harvest in Indiana during the 2007 conservation order increased by 354% from the 2006 conservation order period. The most common comments from participants were not knowing where to hunt and having limited opportunity on light geese.*

### **Regulations**

The light goose conservation order was available statewide in Indiana to residents and non-residents from 1 February to 31 March 2007. Shooting hours were from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. There were no daily bag or possession limits. Shotguns capable of holding more than three shells and electronic calling devices were legal. All participants were subject to the same regulations applied during the regular waterfowl season (i.e., Indiana hunting license, state duck stamp), except that a Federal duck stamp and registration with the Harvest Information Program were not required. In addition to licensing requirements, participants were required to obtain a free permit with an attached pre-addressed, postage paid survey card.

### **Methods**

All participants were required by state law to obtain a free permit. Attached to each permit was a pre-addressed, postage paid survey card to be completed and mailed after the close of the conservation order. Those who did not return their survey card were mailed a second, reminder survey card. No attempt was made to solicit non-respondents after the second survey card was sent.

### **Results**

A total of 194 individuals registered to participate in the conservation order (compared to 103 in 2006) and 113 survey cards were returned (58.2% response rate), of which 62 respondents indicated they participated in the order. An estimated 106 participants pursued light geese for a total of 352 hunter-days in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2007, harvesting an estimated 1216 light geese. An estimated 34 participants used electronic calls, with an estimated 46 using unplugged shotguns. An estimated 28 participants pursued geese one-half hour after sunset, harvesting only an estimated 26 light geese during that time. Efforts to take light geese occurred in 14 known counties (Davies, Gibson, Greene, Jasper, Knox, Marshall, Porter, Posey, Starke, Steuben, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh, and Warrick), seven in which harvest occurred (Table 1). Of the hunters who returned survey cards, only one indicated they would not participate in a conservation order in Indiana if it were available in the future.

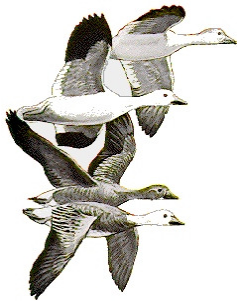
## Discussion

Light goose harvest in Indiana during the 2007 conservation order increased by 354% from the 2006 conservation order period. The most common comments from participants were not knowing where to hunt and having limited opportunity on light geese. Of the active participants that returned their cards, one participant reported harvesting 144 light geese, 21% of all birds taken in only 2 % of all hunter-days (four days hunted). Last year, many more birds were taken in northern Indiana (Starke and Newton counties), while this year 98% of the harvest occurred in the three southwesternmost counties in the state. These three counties (Vanderburgh, Gibson, and Posey) accounted for 62% of hunter-days. This annual variation in effort and harvest (location and level) likely reflects the spotty year-to-year variation in distribution of light geese in Indiana.

Table 1. Reported<sup>a</sup> harvest of light geese in Indiana during the 2007 conservation order.

County	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	Total	6yr Avg
Daviess	7	0	17	0	0	39	63	10.5
Decatur	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Gibson	220	122	2	6	0	84	434	72.3
Greene	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.33
Hendricks	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Knox	3	0	10	0	5	18	36	6
LaPorte	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	1
Marshall	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Monroe	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.33
Newton	0	14	1	0	0	0	15	2.5
Posey	375	128	0	7	2	6	518	86.3
Starke	0	47	0	0	0	0	47	7.8
Sullivan	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.33
Vanderburgh	69	0	0	0	0	0	69	11.5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	33	33	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>1109</b>	<b>185</b>

<sup>a</sup> Reflects distribution of reported (not estimated) harvest of light geese.



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